

HISTORY OF THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE

The Ohio State University

The vision and hope of the founders of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College moved from the ideas on the planning board to stone and brick, then to flesh and blood to give it life. Main building, now known as University Hall, was almost completed in the summer of 1873, and a faculty of seven, including President Orton, was selected. The next step in the procedure was the selection of students for the opening of the College in September, 1873.

This report will be concerned with the development of student admissions throughout the period 1873-1970 with special emphasis given to (1) trends in the admission policies of the University, (2) the organizational structure of the Admissions Office, and (3) some statistical information relative to the increase in number of applications for admission received throughout the period under consideration.

Trends in Admissions Policies

Initially, the faculty faced the task of establishing scholastic requirements for admission. A "broad gauge" type of education had won Board of Trustee approval by only a narrow margin. Since the Act of 1870 provided no specific scholastic requirements for admission of students, the faculty, led by President Orton, set forth a simple formula assuming

that it had the power to prescribe education and other qualifications for admission.

In his first report, President Orton discussed the terms of student admission as follows:

"The Trustees and faculty have felt from the first that however desirable mature and well trained students may be, good faith forbade us to make any demands in the way of preparation which students coming from the common schools of the State could not meet. The terms of admission have therefore been gauged by this standard. . . . The single addition of the elements of algebra is made to these terms it is true. . . ."

Competency in the common branches (i.e., English, arithmetic, geography, physiology, etc.) plus algebra was determined by the results of entrance examinations. Satisfactory performance was required for admission. A competent knowledge of the common branches was considered as that which would entitle its possessor to a certificate of "good grade" to teach a district school (e.g., one-room rural or village).

To the modern educator, this may seem to have been a very low standard for admission to a college. It should be remembered though, that this was a very high standard for the average farm boy who wished to be instructed in agriculture. Only a small portion of the youth advanced beyond a rudimentary knowledge of the common branches. Not many could qualify to teach in a rural school at that time.

Twenty-five students were admitted and registered when the college opened in 1873. This number was selected from a total of 45 applications. Thus, the principle of selective admissions was practiced at this University in the beginning. Unless the applicant possessed a teacher's certificate of satisfactory grade, he was required to pass the entrance examination. This policy of selectivity was the guideline even after the turn of the century.

At first all educational activities were administered within the College. Ten departments of instruction were authorized, but only six were staffed initially. The members of the faculty managed the entrance examinations and subsequent admission of students. As the College grew slowly in numbers of students and in size of faculty, departments were sub-divided, but admission requirements and procedures changed very little except for brief periods (1877 and 1880). During these two periods, when entrance requirements were lowered, student admissions increased and also student dismissals increased due to unsatisfactory academic achievement. In both instances, higher admission standards were restored quickly.

With the advent of the Canfield administration (1895-1899), considerable changes were made in the University organization (name was changed to The Ohio State University in 1878). Academic departments, which had evolved into schools under a previous administration, became six individual colleges headed by a Dean. Each of these colleges tended to establish its own entrance requirements and managed its own admission of students. Another development worthy of mention was the visitation of some Ohio high schools by members of the University faculty to observe the quality of classroom work. If the faculty committee reported favorably on a high school, many of the school's graduates were admitted to the University without taking entrance examinations. This visitation system was initiated because no State agency was equipped to provide the evaluation of high school instruction.

At the close of the Canfield era and at the turn of the century, the total enrollment of the University had reached 1,252. The University faculty and the new President, William Oxley Thompson, realized that the confusion

due to varied patterns of college admission requirements and the increasing load of administrative work required of teaching staff demanded a different method of handling student admissions. An increasing number of transfer applicants from other colleges imposed a further load on faculty to evaluate transcripts from other colleges.

Volume II of The History of The Ohio State University reveals that:

"In 1905 the Entrance Board was created for the purpose of systematizing the work of faculty admissions people. Many colleges felt the need of relief from admissions details. On May 23, 1905, Professor Joseph V. Denney of the English Department, was chosen the first chairman. In 1906 he was succeeded by Dr. William E. Henderson under whose chairmanship the work of the Board was reorganized thoroughly and lifted to a high state of efficiency."

The Entrance Board consisted of seven faculty members representing seven different departments of instruction. The President of the University was an ex-officio member of the Board. It's mission was "to pass upon all questions pertaining to the entrance of students; to provide for the necessary examinations at the close and opening of the year, and to bring to the Faculty appropriate reports of its work." It also passed on the credentials of students from other colleges seeking advanced standing. Perhaps the main activity of the Board involved entrance examinations although students were admitted by certificates from approved high schools and academies. Many State high schools, however, did not enjoy an approved status.

It should be noted that this plan provided a central office for the processing of student applications for admission to the University under faculty supervision until 1922.

In 1901 the College of Arts, Philosophy, and Science outlined in its bulletin the entrance requirements for beginning freshmen. These

requirements were expressed in terms of high school units as follows:

English	3 units
Social Science (History and Government)	3 units
Mathematics (Algebra and Geometry)	4 units
Science	3 units
Ancient and Modern Language	9 units
(or 6 units of language and 3 units from above 4 groups)	

The next year the College of Agriculture and Domestic Science outlined the same entrance requirements as Arts and was followed quickly by the College of Engineering. No doubt the improved quality of high school graduates influenced this action. The Arts College entrance requirements were liberalized in 1908-1909 by enlarging the field of acceptable elective high school units for admission.

An event of great significance to The Ohio State University transpired in 1914, when the Ohio Legislature passed an Act which provided that:

"A graduate of the twelfth grade shall be entitled to admission without examination to any college or university which is supported wholly or in part by the State, but for unconditional admission may be required to complete such units not included in his high school course as may be prescribed, not less than two years prior to his entrance, by the faculty of the institution."

So far as The Ohio State University was concerned, this new admissions policy applied to the Colleges of Arts, Philosophy, and Science and Education beginning with the Summer Quarter of 1914. This Act also assigned the function of high school inspection to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and on December 21, 1915, the High School Visitation Committee of the University was abolished. This new legislation terminated the policy of selective admission of freshmen students at The Ohio State University. However, applicants for admission continued to take entrance examinations to demonstrate proficiency in required units of instruction not completed in high school.

The liberalization of admission requirements applied to freshmen largely, and in 1915, a great increase in beginning students was noted. World War I also had its effect on both number of new students and the educational programs of the University. The termination of this war had an immediate effect of increased applications for admission to various divisions of Ohio State. Expansion of educational opportunities resulted as well.

A new admission policy appeared on the scene of progress in 1925. This new policy, which applied to students seeking to transfer to The Ohio State University with advanced standing from other institutions of higher education, required the successful applicant for admission to have at least a "C" average in all courses undertaken previously. This new policy established a selective admissions system for those who had attended another college or university.

Two additional trends in admission policies and practices should be mentioned. With the establishment of the Office of University Examiner, student admission decisions were made increasingly by qualified Entrance Board staff members and less by faculty members. Of course, faculty members were consulted frequently, especially with regard to graduate and professional school admissions, but final decisions were announced from the Office of the Entrance Board.

In recent years, a considerable increase in faculty involvement in admission decisions, especially for the graduate and professional schools, has developed. This involvement has marked a partial return to early practices and procedures.

Organizational Structure of the Admissions Office

In the beginning (1873) all members of the faculty of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College assisted with the examination and admission of students. Actually, this plan was followed for the first 32 years of the institution's existence. As the number of departments of instruction increased, faculty members contributed of their time and energy to conducting examinations, grading papers, and admitting or rejecting applicants. Finally, the demand on faculty time became so great that a different procedure became necessary.

The organization of the Entrance Board was developed in 1905. This Board was composed of seven faculty members, one from each of seven different departments of instruction. This Board was appointed by the President of the University. A chairman and a secretary were selected from among its members. Professor Lester E. Wolfe, Secretary, was the working force behind student admissions for many years. However, as of April 1, 1920, he retired from the position, and Bland L. Stradley was employed to assume the duties as Secretary as of July 1, 1920.

Actually, the work load of student admissions became so demanding of faculty time that it was clear that a different procedure must be found. In a Report of the Entrance Board, dated November 11, 1920, W. E. Henderson, Chairman, pointed out that:

"The duties of the Entrance Board have become so numerous and its work so extensive that the existing form or organization is no longer adequate. To discharge efficiently the duties pertaining to the chairmanship of the Board will require the major part of the time of the professor holding the appointment and will necessitate his presence during the entire summer; and to acquire familiarity with the intricate details of the work to such an extent as to be really efficient presupposes much more time and enthusiasm than can be reasonably expected from a professor already occupied with his own work."

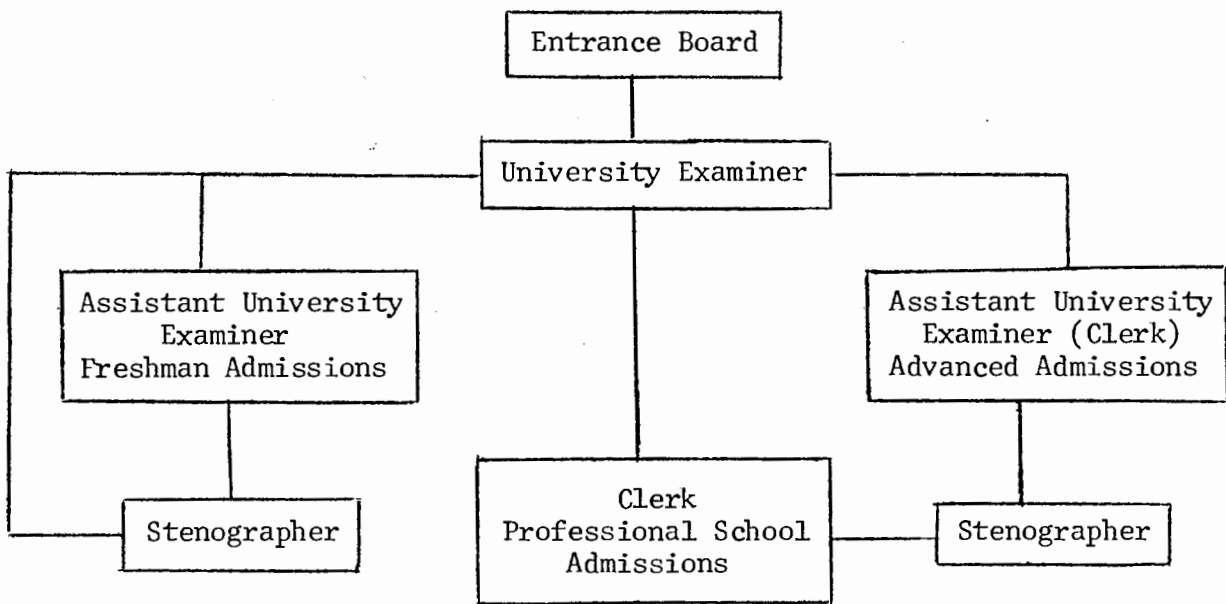
At a special meeting of the University Faculty in 1920, the Entrance Board recommended:

"That the offices of Chairman and Secretary of the Entrance Board be abolished, and the office of University Examiner be created, the Examiner to be ex-officio chairman of the standing committee of the Faculty on entrance, to hold professorial rank preferably in the College of Education, and to be appointed by the President with the concurrence of the Administrative Council of Deans."

The recommendations were approved by the Faculty and Mr. Stradley became University Examiner as well as Chairman of the Entrance Board in 1922. After almost 50 years of student admissions activity, the University identified a person to direct this function on a full-time basis. Not only did he administer entrance examinations and supervise student admissions, but also he visited interested prospective students in Ohio high schools by invitation. With other faculty members he also visited other colleges in Ohio and some neighboring states to evaluate the quality of their programs of instruction and facilities.

In 1922, the University Faculty also approved the employment of a clerk for the Examiner who would be fully qualified to conduct the ordinary work of student admissions in the absence of the Examiner. The first Admissions Office staff consisted of the University Examiner, a clerk, a stenographer, and an additional half-time stenographer--a total of four. Following is an organizational table of the Office of the Entrance Board as it existed in 1928-1929 when the first Assistant University Examiner was appointed.

ENTRANCE BOARD OFFICE

Table of Organization 1928-1929

The Entrance Board staff of 1945-1946 included a total of ten persons plus one half-time assistant--an increase of five persons over the 1928-1929 staff. However, the number of students admitted in the same period increased 50 percent to 10,897 in 1945-1946.

The organization and personnel of the Entrance Board staff changed minimally until 1937. During that year, Dr. Stradley was appointed Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences retaining his position of University Examiner until a successor could be found. This dual responsibility continued until 1944 when Dean Stradley was appointed Vice President for Student Relations. Soon after assuming his new position, Dr. Stradley announced the selection of Dr. Ronald B. Thompson (University of Utah) as Registrar and University Examiner following the retirement of Miss Edith Cockins as Registrar. This combined leadership position was established to coordinate more effectively the work of the admissions and registration areas. The Entrance Board Office continued to operate as the central admissions agency for the University.

With the continued growth of the University both in size of student body and expansion of services, Dr. Ronald B. Thompson was named to a new position in 1957 as Executive Dean, Office of Special Services. The positions of University Examiner and Registrar were filled separately when Dr. W. Lloyd Sprouse, Assistant University Examiner, was promoted to University Examiner, and Kenneth R. Varner, Assistant Registrar, was appointed Registrar. In 1962 the title University Examiner was changed to Director of Admissions. Dr. Sprouse retired from the Office August 1, 1966. Dr. Ted R. Robinson, Associate Director of Admissions, was appointed as the current Director of Admissions that year.

Throughout the span of years since 1922 many capable and dedicated people of the faculty, Entrance Board staff, and Admissions Office staff have contributed effectively to the task of assisting large numbers of people into membership in the University community. The number of these people is such that individual mention is impossible.

With the phenomenal growth of the University during the last 25 years, the volume and scope of the work in the Admissions Office has enlarged greatly. The Office provides multiple informational, educational, and personal services to college offices, other agencies, and students. As of 1970, the total Admissions Office staff will exceed 60 in number.

Page 12 is an organizational table of the present Admissions Office professional staff. The reader is invited to compare it with the 1928-1929 staff table on Page 9.

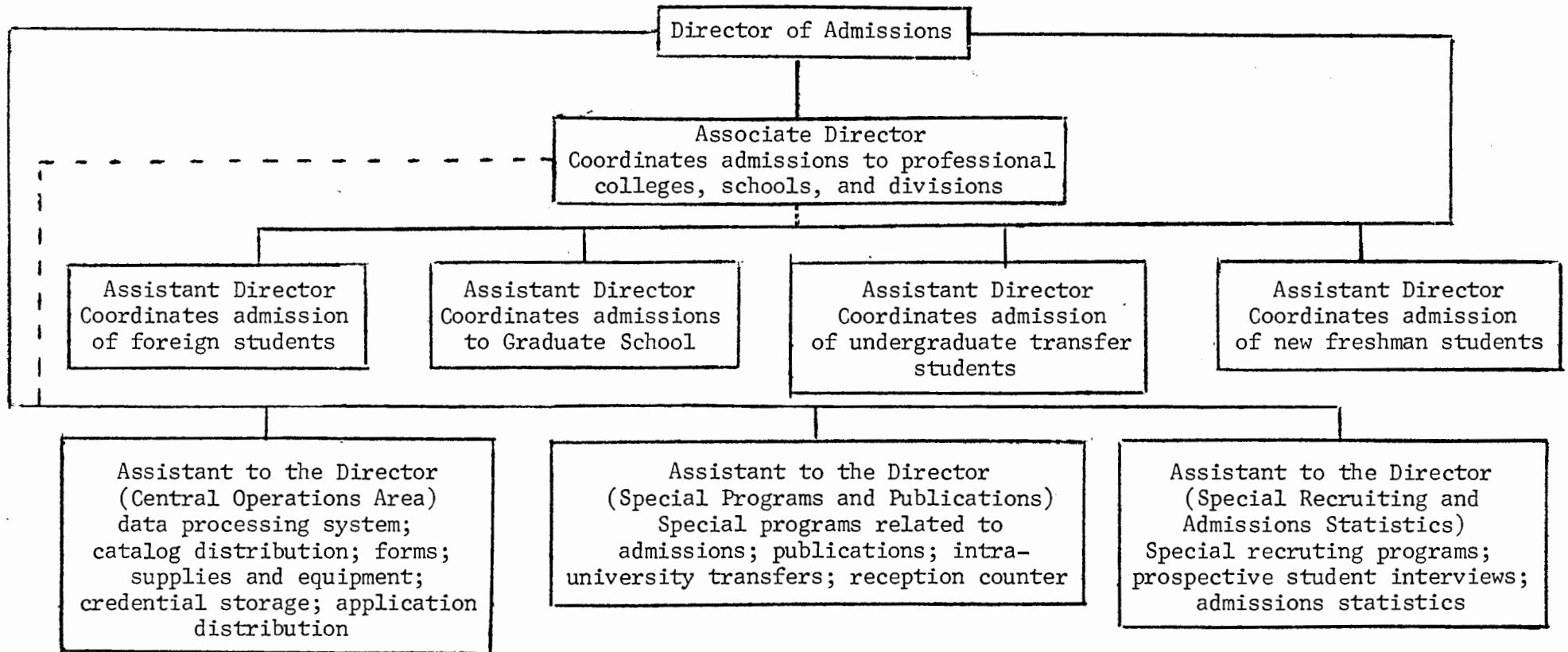
Some Statistical Information Regarding Student Applications

Records of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College reveal that 45 applications for admission were received for the autumn term of 1873. Twenty-five of this number qualified for admission and 20 were rejected because of inability to pass the entrance examinations. Records of student admissions for the following 32 years are meager. In the academic year of 1904-05, 1,870 students were registered, but information regarding the applications for admission that year were not preserved.

Since the organization of the Entrance Board in 1905, dependable records of student admissions have been retained. The accompanying table (Page 13) provides admission information in five-year intervals beginning with 1907-08. Total admissions during the period of time from 1907-08 through 1942-43 increased rather steadily, except that graduate education was unusually appealing. The year 1947-48 marked the campus

ADMISSIONS OFFICE

Table of Organization 1969



COMPARATIVE ADMISSION STATISTICS BY YEARS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Undergraduate</u>	<u>Graduate</u>	<u>Professional</u>	<u>Total</u>
1905-06				650
1907-08	927		188	1115
1912-13	1580	68	163	1811
1917-18	2459	51	205	2715
1922-23	3891	391	498	4780
1927-28	5212	855	476	6543
1932-33	4370	1303	546	6219
1937-38	6448	1476	350	8274
1942-43	6765	815	771*	8351
1947-48	10133	1767	497	12397
1952-53	7706	1626	828	10160
1957-58	9801	1927	623	12348
1962-63	16875	2584	898	20357
1967-68	19952	4232	933	25117

*Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine accepted two First-Year Classes of students.

invasion of returning veterans of World War II which resulted in an abnormal increase. From 1957-58 through 1967-68, the total student admissions reflected the greatest growth in the University's entire history. Professional school admissions have almost doubled in the last 20 years, while graduate school admissions have more than doubled in the last ten years.

Another factor contributed to student expansion in the last decade--the regional campuses. These campuses have added many opportunities for students to join the Ohio State community.

Summary

This report has presented briefly the growth of student admission activities together with the development of academic standards for admission to The Ohio State University. Complete faculty administration characterized the function initially. As the student population increased, a representative faculty committee, entitled the Entrance Board, directed the various admission activities. The President's Annual Report of 1936-37 contained the following objectives of this Board:

1. To admit students to the undergraduate and professional colleges and to the graduate school;
2. To disseminate knowledge of and instill confidence in the University through contacts with other colleges, with high schools, and with high grade students;
3. To maintain a professional affiliation with education in general through active cooperation with the North Central Association, the Ohio College Association, American Council on Education, and the State Department of Education.

The appointment of the University Examiner in 1922 centralized the administration of admission functions. In recent years a greater degree

of faculty involvement in admission decisions has developed which has marked a partial return to earlier practices.

The Admissions Office is a very important activity of the University and is staffed with highly trained personnel who conduct a complex educational activity.

W. Lloyd Sprouse
Director of Admissions Emeritus

July, 1969